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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1495

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 003688

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DEPT FOR FOR D, P, S/CT, INL, DRL, AND EAP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2026
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [KJUS](#) [ASEC](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: TRAINING MOBILE BRIGADE PERSONNEL WOULD IMPROVE
HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: A. 03 SECSTATE 310662 POLICY ON BRIMOB POLICE
TRAINING

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 3484 TENSION HIGH IN ABEPURA

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador B. Lynn Pascoe, reason 1.4 (B)
and (D).

Summary/Action Request

[1](#)1. (C) The deaths of 3 "Mobile Brigade" (Brimob) policemen in Jayapura, Papua on March 16 highlight a major deficiency in our approach to police training in Indonesia. The 2003 ban on the training of Brimob personnel by ICITAP (ref A) prevents us from aiding the unit most in need of assistance and the one usually tasked with handling the most potentially violent situations. Any possible benefits to us from the isolation of Mobile Brigade have long expired; with the GOI, we must engage and professionalize this critical part of the Indonesian National Police (INP). Proper training would decrease the risk of major incidents, particularly in Indonesia's most volatile regions. The ban on ICITAP training of Brimob impedes the improvements we seek. We ask Washington to end the restriction on ICITAP training of Mobile Brigade personnel and allow them to receive training under the same conditions (including vetting) applied to other INP members and units. End Summary.

Brimob Lost, Scared in Clash with Protesters

[1](#)2. (C) The graphic video footage of the brutal killings of three policemen and an air force sergeant on March 16 (ref B) made apparent the inadequate training and skills of Mobile Brigade forces deployed in Jayapura. Its personnel, equipped with little more than helmets, sticks, and a few shields, displayed meager understanding of basic crowd management and civil disorder response techniques. When the large crowd turned violent, the police cowered behind the few shields they had and allowed their attackers to outflank and pummel them from three sides with bricks and softball-sized rocks. As their lines crumbled and they turned and ran in fear, several from their ranks tripped, fell, and became targets for beating and stoning by the rioters, resulting in the deaths of three. Local police reacted with anger, prompting the national police chief to fly in and take control of the situation.

The Role of Brimob

[1](#)3. (C) The Indonesian police use its Mobile Brigade to control the most potentially explosive incidents and areas. Brimob units defend our diplomatic posts, particularly during demonstrations, and many other prominent and potential targets frequented by Westerners. The USG has committed to

help transform the INP into a more professional, competent and respected law enforcement organization as it emerges from its status as stepchild to the military. An enormous hurdle to attaining our goals will remain if we cannot train those INP forces charged with the toughest tasks. Mobile Brigade units cannot operate at our level of expectations without training up to our standards.

Engagement vs. Isolation

¶4. (C) While past Brimob actions have earned them a negative reputation, any beneficial impact from our isolating the unit has long passed. Our 2005 Human Rights Report cites individual incidents of extrajudicial killings, torture and a firefight with the military. Despite these specific incidents committed by a few, the current ban on ICITAP training prevents us from providing all Mobile Brigade personnel the human rights, appropriate force, and defense techniques training that our Civil Disturbance Management program has given other INP members and units since 2002. This leaves Brimob personnel ill-equipped to react properly, making them prone to overreact and retaliate with human rights abuses. We need to engage and professionalize this critical and potentially highly-effective INP component.

Proceed Within the Letter and Spirit of Leahy

¶5. (C) Our approach must follow the letter and the spirit of the law re training of security forces. We regularly select INP personnel outside of Brimob for USG-funded training. In accordance with the Leahy Amendment, we carefully vet individuals and units for violations of human rights violations before implementing training. We apply this

vetting to those Mobile Brigade members trained in counter-terrorism skills under the DS/ATA program, as specifically allowed under Department policy (ref A). Our ICITAP training should apply the same standard to Mobile Brigade units and personnel as it does to the rest of the INP. We would pick Brimob units or members, apply the vigorous vetting used in our current training programs, and train those who make it through.

¶6. (C) By helping build a more capable and professional Brimob, we would enhance GOI ability to maintain civil order consistent with a stable, accountable, and mature democracy, and with greater respect for human rights. Neglecting Brimob makes no sense: it only serves to perpetuate the very problems we hope to eliminate.

Action Request

¶7. (C) We recommend scraping of current restrictions on ICITAP training of Mobile Brigade units, and allow ICITAP to train those units and members under the same conditions now applied to other INP units and members.
PASCOE